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DEPT FOR AF/E AND AF A/S FRAZER

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA--THE WAY FORWARD

REF: NAIROBI 1401

Classified By: Ambassador Michael Ranneberger. Reason 1.4 (d)

11. (U) Summary. Building on Nairobi 1401, this message lays out a roadmap for influencing Somalia towards security and stability. Many of the elements we delineated in reftel remain relevant to current developments. End summary.

12. (C) The fighting in Mogadishu in recent weeks has clouded efforts to move Somalia forward towards security and stability. Despite the fighting, however, there continue to be reasonable prospects that this can be achieved. Important to considering the roadmap for the way forward is our analysis of the basis of the fighting. Information from multiple sources indicates that the fighting was fundamentally stimulated by a feeling of alienation from the TFG on the part of key Hawiye sub-clans. Hardline Islamic Courts' elements, particularly through the al-Shabaab militia, are seeking to take advantage of this situation to get an insurgency underway. As we know, al-Qaeda East Africa elements are linked to the al-Shabaab. All of this makes for a highly dangerous combination, but it is still possible to marginalize the spoilers.

13. (C) Since shortly after their removal from power, hardline elements of the Courts seeking to act as spoilers have found some support within some of the Hawiye sub-clans (particularly the Haber Gedir/Ayr) because these sub-clans feel alienated and threatened by the Transitional Federal Government. The TFG/Ethiopian efforts to attempt disarmament of the Hawiye/Haber Gedir sub-clan reaffirmed concerns.

14. (C) There is a chicken and egg question with respect to the violence: did these actions play into the hands of the Islamic Courts remnants seeking to start an insurgency, or did the activity of Islamic Courts remnants precipitate the security concerns that led to the effort to disarm and subsequent fighting? Regardless of the answer, the bottom-line is that mistrust between the TFG and key Hawiye is as great as ever, and the Islamic Courts remnants continue to exploit it.

15. (C) It seems open to question whether an insurgency in the classic sense has developed. What is happening in Mogadishu is not shades of Iraq or even Afghanistan. The Hawiye's motivation to engage the TFG in combat is based on their perception of political alienation and physical vulnerability resulting from the attempted disarmament. While groups of Islamic Courts remnants work to foment violence, it would be a mistake to over-emphasize their influence at this point; and we should recognize that the TFG tends to brand its political opponents as "terrorists". Maintaining the strength of the traditional Hawiye leadership is critical to marginalizing the al-Shabaab.

16. (C) Our analysis leads us to conclude that the Somalia process can still be moved forward in a positive direction. This will require continuing vigorous U.S. engagement with all the Somali actors and with Ethiopia. As the visit of A/S Frazer to Baidoa made clear, the TFG realizes that U.S. support is crucial to its legitimacy and is therefore receptive to U.S. influence.

17. (S) The following lays out the lines along which we have been working and steps to move the Somalia process forward.

--Enhance TFG legitimacy and credibility. Following up on A/S Frazer's discussions with the senior TFG leadership, we have made clear to the TFG that the fighting, resulting in substantial civilian casualties, and other missteps (including restrictions imposed on humanitarian assistance and the Deputy Defense Minister's call to expel the Haber Gedir from Mogadishu), have undermined its credibility and legitimacy. The TFG has been responsive to specific requests. The Ambassador wrote to President Yusuf requesting that the TFG take several steps to unblock humanitarian assistance. The TFG (per septel) has taken action, and assistance is now flowing. We will continue to monitor the TFG's interaction with the humanitarian assistance community. The Ambassador also urged Yusuf to make public statements expressing regret about the violence and emphasizing his commitment to dialogue. Yusuf made such a statement on April 28 that has been reasonably well-received within Somalia. The Ambassador had also requested that the statement made by Deputy Defense Minister Salad Ali Jelle calling for expulsion of certain groups from Mogadishu be retracted. Jelle issued a lukewarm retraction in a radio broadcast over a week ago.

NAIROBI 00001867 002 OF 003

Building on this and the very constructive discussions which A/S Frazer had with the TFG leadership in Baidoa, we must move quickly to disburse critically needed assistance. First, we need to move ahead with disbursement of the \$10 million in development assistance. Second, we should move the \$25 million section 1207 funding ahead as quickly as possible. And, third, the additional \$60 million requested from Congress will be essential to maintain momentum. Moving ahead with development projects and security assistance will help enhance the TFG's credibility, legitimacy, and effectiveness.

We should continue to urge Arab support for the TFG, particularly from the Gulf states and Egypt. This should include both political and financial support.

--Promote dialogue. Yusuf's call for dialogue in his recent press conference is helpful. Reporting in multiple channels indicates that serious attempts at dialogue are taking place, and these must be encouraged. The Ethiopians remain in contact with key Hawiye leaders, and they are reported to have coordinated a meeting between members of the Hawiye Leadership Council and Yusuf on April 29. There are also indications that the Hawiye leaders are seriously interested in working out a political accommodation and appreciate, just as A/S Frazer argued in Baidoa, that this is the only viable way to marginalize the radical remnants of the Courts. (Some reporting suggests that the Hawiye leaders are prepared to sever links with radical Islamists such as Aden Ayro.) Without inserting ourselves into the middle of such dialogue, the U.S. must continue to urge all actors to talk. The Ambassador has continued to emphasize this with radio interviews widely heard in Somalia. We remain in communication with a broad spectrum of contacts within Somalia to encourage dialogue.

In order to help reassure the Hawiye and reestablish some momentum in the wake of the recent fighting, we are urging the TFG and its national reconciliation committee headed by Ali Mahdi to spell out publicly the agenda for the national

reconciliation congress (specifically: discussion of power-sharing and a roadmap for the 2009 transition, including constitutional drafting arrangements). We also should encourage the TFG to begin the process of establishing local administrative, judicial, and security structures in accordance with the Transitional Federal Charter. We will continue to work closely with the UNDP and other donors to coordinate financial, advisory, and observer support for the congress.

We should continue to explore the possible utility of supporting or acquiescing in the replacement of Prime Minister Gedi in the context of the reconciliation congress. His removal and replacement by a Hawiye more broadly acceptable to that community may be essential to achieve a viable political accommodation. (Latest rumors are that Gedi is asking \$30-40 million to step down.)

--Influence and harmonize efforts with the Ethiopians. The Ethiopian interest in ending their costly involvement and leaving behind a secure outcome gives them some common ground with us. In addition to the close dialogue that we are already engaged in, there may be possibilities to enhance coordination of efforts. Specifically, it may be possible to coordinate more closely messages that we and they are sending to the TFG and to other Somali actors, particularly the Hawiye. We presumably have shared interests in doing so in order to help make the national reconciliation congress a success.

--Refine our public diplomacy message. We should continue to recognize in our public statements that the fighting in Mogadishu is in some measure due to al-Qaeda and Islamic Courts' efforts to spoil chances for stability by exploiting clan mistrust. We should also emphasize the human tragedy associated with the long-standing clan warfare in Somalia, and our efforts to bring about reconciliation. Somalis tend to react negatively to characterizing the conflict through a purely terrorist prism, overshadowing our positive humanitarian and political messages, and diluting our influence with the general Somali public.

--Dangle carrots. The national reconciliation congress) and the discussions leading up to it that will likely "pre-cook" the event) is emerging as virtually a make-or-break opportunity to advance security and stability. It might be useful to announce before the congress the international community's willingness to host a donor

NAIROBI 00001867 003 OF 003

conference on a date certain) but conditioned on a successful outcome from the congress. That dangles the carrot of the kind of large international investment Somalis are calling for, with the stick also evident that we will not provide such assistance if the Somalis cannot get their act together.

--Accelerate AU deployment and push the UN process. Facilitating the withdrawal of the Ethiopians and bolstering security through deployment of AU forces remains ever more urgent. Continuing to move forward UN consideration of a peacekeeping force will also be helpful. In the meantime, we should work to extend the AMISOM mandate that expires in June.

18. (U) This message has been cleared by relevant offices and agencies.

RANNEBERGER